

SAṆKARA'S TREATMENT OF ŚABDAPRABHAVATVA  
IN BRAHMASŪTRABHĀṢYA I,3,28 AND THE PROBLEM OF  
A NEXUS BETWEEN THE SO-CALLED ŚABDABRAHMAN  
AND SPHOṬA. SOME CONSIDERATIONS.

The report on the part of Śrī Saṅkarācārya of the *querelle* between *Sphoṭavādin-s* and *Varṇavādin-s*, which forms quite a prominent item in his commentary upon *Devatādhikaraṇa* in *Brahmasūtra-s*, affords us many an interesting occasion of reflection. We propose here to deal with some features of this well-known passage in the great *advaitin's* masterpiece which are relevant for the knowledge both of his own position in regard of the basis of the whole question and of the data which can be presumed to have been available to him in order to reach that very position.

One of the most vital points in the discussion on the articulation of *Sphoṭavāda* taking place between scholars, is certainly the subsistence of a nexus between *Śabdabrahman* and *sphoṭa*. The attitude of Saṅkara with reference to such subject has been differently reconstructed. For instance, S. D. Joshi is of the opinion that, while the *ācārya* criticizes the doctrine of *sphoṭa* proper, he « spares the doctrine of *śabdabrahman* which generally agrees with his philosophical thinking »<sup>1</sup>. By so remarking, the learned Doctor seems to imply that such a disparity of handling by Saṅkara somehow acts as a corroboratory element in regard of the unsoundness of the idea of any connection between the two doctrines in Bhartṛhari. On the contrary, Madeleine Biarreau, who (with her usual acuteness) upholds the view that such a connection is to be found<sup>2</sup>, maintains that the *advaitin* actually refutes both doctrines<sup>3</sup>.

1. *The Sphoṭanirṇaya* (Chapter XIV of the *Vaiyākaraṇabhūṣaṇasāra*) of Kauṇḍa Bhaṭṭa, Poona, 1967, p. 43.

2. Cfr. for instance *Le Tattvabindu de Vācaspatimiśra*, Pondichéry, 1956, p. VII: « celui-ci (scilicet the *sphoṭa*) est inséparable... d'une conception de l'Absolu comme *śabda* ».

3. Cfr. loc. cit. in n. 2 and *La philosophie de Maṇḍana Miśra vue à partir de la Brahmasiddhi*, Paris, 1969, p. 110: « Saṅkara refuse à la fois le *sphoṭa* et un Brahman qui serait Parole ».

Now let us examine first of all the occasion which, in *Brahma-sūtrabhāṣya*, is apparently deemed suitable to introduce the exposition of *Sphoṭavāda*, then of the alternative represented by *Varṇavāda* as a counterpart: having dealt in full with the *hetu* «*ataḥ prabhavāt*» in the *sūtra*, he asks: «*Kimātmakam punaḥ śabdam abhipretyedaṁ śabdaprabhavatvam ucyate?*». That we are confronted here with something more than a simple rhetoric expedient to link somehow the new item to the main discussion, is shown by the logical reason given, immediately after the aforequoted question, for the assumption of *sphoṭa*: namely, that it is forced upon the exegete of the *sūtra* by the eternality/invariability of *śabda* postulated in its own turn by *śabda-prabhavatva*. The necessity to acquit of any doubt this *nityatva* is the ground on which Śaṅkara proceeds to test the two rival doctrines. It is somewhat evident that we have here a nexus between the role of *śabda* in the manifestation of the universe and the *sphoṭa*. Far from keeping the two separated, as it is the case with Bhartṛhari and Maṇḍanaśrī (whether or no we agree with the thesis of a connection established implicitly by them), Śrī Śaṅkarācārya explicitly points out the dependence of the latter on the former one. Of course, the relationship so individuated could be read as too much extrinsic in respect of the intimate correspondence between *Brahman* qua all-embracing semanticity and the atemporal dimension of language, at least as *Vaiyākaraṇa* tenets are concerned, to the eyes of those who admit of a connection between them. Yet Śaṅkara's laying out has, on modern interpretations of this difficult nodus, the advantage of a limpid, clear-cut and fully understandable delineation. Such is usually the character of his treatment of doctrinal points, and it must be conceded that as a rule Indian thought looks at a likewise presenting as a desirable goal. The point is, does the *ācārya* reflect a pre-existing set of ideas, or establish the nexus anew? Of the two elements reckoned with by him, *nityatva* offers no problem: it is the very feature of *śabda* which the idea of *sphoṭa* stands on since the older available evidences<sup>4</sup> and, with the exception of the school remembered by Bhartṛhari as upholder

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4. Leaving aside *Aṣṭādhyāyī* 6,1,123, too generic to be clearly interpreted. Paṭanjali, in both contexts where he is found employing the term «*sphoṭa*» (on this subject cfr. JOHN BROUGH, *Theories of General Linguistics in the Sanskrit Grammarians*, in «*Transactions of the Philological Society*», Oxford, 1951, p. 35 f.; K. A. SUBRAHMANYA IYER, *Bhartṛhari on Dhvani*, in «*Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*», vol. 46, 1965, p. 50; MADELEINE BIARDEAU, *Théorie de la connaissance et philosophie de la parole dans le brahmanisme classique*, Paris-La Haye, 1964, p. 367 ff.; S. D. JOSHI, *op. cit.* in n. 1 *supra*, p. 13 ff.), unequivocally refers to the invariable side of *śabda*: ad *Sivasūtra* 3-4, contrasting it with the variability implicit in the shifting from the retroflex *antaḥsthā*, *repha*, to the retroflex *hrasvasvara*,

of the identification of the *sphoṭa* with *prathamābhiniṣṛtaśabda*<sup>5</sup>, it appears as a most conspicuous tenet in the different presentations of *Sphoṭavāda*.

The situation is different with *śabdaprabhavaiva*: Saṅkara's explanation of it, besides being perfectly adequate to the requirement of the introduction of *nityatva*, strikes us as being pretty far from the doctrine of *Śabdabrahman*, as we find it in Bhartṛhari. Can we try to reconstruct, through his attitude in regard of the coming into being of the universe along Vedic *śabda*, a different perspective, related both to *Sphoṭavāda*

*rkāra* (cfr. *Pāṇiniyaśikṣā* 17: *syur mūrdhanyā ṛ-ṭu-ra-śāḥ*); ad *Aṣṭādhyāyī* 1,1,70, contrasting it with the variability implicit in the different degree of *vr̥ddhi* lent to *śabda* by the sonorousness (*dhvani*) depending on the sound vibration conveying it (the only one, in fact, to be distinctively perceived/recognised in actual verbal communication: *dhvanis tu khalu lakṣyate*; this being akin to Saṅkara's position and quite far from later *Sphoṭavāda* perspective. Cfr. the indignant reply put by the *ācārya* in the mouth of the *pūrvapakṣin*: «*na kalpayāmy aham sphoṭam pratyakṣam eva tu enam avagacchāmi!*»). It does not seem legitimate to infer any ontological conclusion on the ground of Patañjali's scanty materials, apart from his distinction *sphoṭa śabdo dvaniḥ śabdaguṇaḥ*; if an analogy from non-Indian world could be suggested, we would like to submit that of a vocal music score: here the *śabda* could be found represented by the syllables of the written text, whereas the *śabdaguṇa*-s would correspond to the entire score, that is the text plus the features of length, pitch etc. indicated by the notation, not semantically relevant in the same way as the text proper. The contention of Dr. S. D. Joshi (*op. cit.*, p. 16) that «*sphoṭa* is somewhat analogous either to the phonematic pattern of sounds or the phonetic species of sounds», albeit founded on the authority of Kaiyaṭa, seems not to take fully into account the fact that the actual theorization on the part of Patañjali of such a pattern, «restricted», to use his own words (*ibidem*, p. 18), «to the same class of varied spoken sounds», as *varṇākṛti* (cfr. ad *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, 1,1,1: *avarṇākṛtir upadiṣṭā sarvaṃ avarṇakulaṃ grahīṣyati*), although pointing out a corresponding *jāti* (cfr. ad *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, 4,1,63: *ākṛtigrahaṇā jātir*), rules out the possibility of a pure and simple identification with *sphoṭa*, since Patañjali upholds the variability of *ākṛti* in connection with its empirical character (cfr. ad *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, 1,7,9: *ākṛtir anityā*). If one, therefore, accepts the view of Dr. Joshi about the pattern, the latter should be constructed as a kind of bridge between the mutable world of *dhvani* and the *sphoṭa* proper. The latter should perhaps be read, in its own turn, as the phonematic *jāti* pointed out through it. By the way, when Śrī Saṅkarācārya puts forward as a difficulty the necessity of the assumption of *varṇākṛti* given the doctrine of separate reality of *varṇavyakti*-s (cfr. *pratyabhijñāna-siddhaye varṇākṛtayaḥ kalpayitavyāḥ*), he apparently does not follow Patañjali in his distinguishing *ākṛti* from *jāti* (but whether such is the case or not, the argument of the *advaitin* stands on the *sāmānya* feature of *ākṛti*, which Patañjali himself acknowledges; cfr. MADELEINE BIAUDEAU, *Théorie, cit.*, p. 47, on this particular issue).

5. *Vākyapadiya* 1,102; cfr. the structural affinity of the distinction *sphoṭa-dhvanis* in this school with the one *prākṛtadhvani-vaiṣṭhādhvani*-s sketched by Bhartṛhari himself in *Vākyapadiya* 1,76 ff., particularly in Nāgeśa's application to *Aṣṭādhyāyī* 1,1,70; on which argument, see S. D. JOSHI, *loc. cit.* in n. 4 *supra* and p. 19, n. 20; cfr. also K. A. SUBRAHMANYA IYER, *Who are the Anityasphoṭavādins*, in «*Proceedings of Oriental Conference*», 1935, pp. 253 ff., and, for the identification of the school under discussion with the view of Kātyāyana, K. RAGHAVAN PILLAI, *Studies in the Vākyapadiya*, vol. I, *The Vākyapadiya*, Critical Text of Cantos I and II with English Translation, Summary of Ideas and Notes, Delhi-Varanasi-Patna, 1971, p. 61.

and *Varṇavāda* as his *bhāṣya* has it? In the text under consideration, the *ācārya* in point of fact denies a *pūrvapakṣa* contrasting the « *ataḥ prabhavāt* » of the *sūtra* with *Brahmasūtra* 1,1,2. This shows that, while he does not know of, or chooses not to take into consideration, the view of Bhartṛhari (otherwise he would have presented a *pūrvapakṣa* actually suggesting the coordination of the two *sūtra*-s), Śaṅkara is not prepared to conceive as *Paramabrahman* the *śabda* connected with *śrṣṭi*. Even the denial on his part of the role of *upādānakāraṇa* for that *śabda* cannot be regarded as a proof of his concerning himself with such a hypothesis, since *Brahman* is present there as an example (*brahmaprabhavatvād*) and in Indian expositive technique an example cannot coincide with the point illustrated by it outside from the relevant common features. This, by the way, seems to dispose of both the thesis of the *advaitin* accepting *Śabdabrahman* and the thesis of his refuting it, as such doctrine is found in Bhartṛhari. But what about a possible alternative construction? While commenting upon *Chāndogyopaniṣad* 2,23,3, Śrī Śaṅkarācārya states: « *Paramātmavikāraś ca nāmadheyamātram* ». Now, these *vikāra*-s work, in their own way, as *bhāvabhedaśya yonayaḥ* just as Bhartṛhari's ones do<sup>6</sup>. To witness, in the commentary upon *Brahmasūtra* 1,3,28 that we are discussing here, it is described as the world, beginning with *deva*-s, comes forth from the *śabda* of the *Veda*-s as a preceding stage in the process of *śrṣṭi*<sup>7</sup>. First there is such *śabda*, eternal/invariable, whose intimate reality consists in its semantic burden (if we are allowed to use a modern Western equivalent for Śaṅkara's *vācakātmanā*).

The relationship between *nityaśabda* and *praṇava* is not so easy to discern in the works of the *ācārya*: as it is well-known, the latter is considered by him as the best means of representation of *Brahman*, being iconical in its regard. Śaṅkara outlines a distinction between two faces of this function of *praṇava*, the name-aspect and the *pratīka*-aspect<sup>8</sup>. In this very function, according to the aforequoted *bhāṣya* on *Chāndogyopaniṣad* 2,23,3 (*pratīkabhūtena*), *praṇava* acts as a relying factor for every *vāc*. This term of the *Upaniṣad* is explained as denoting something which is born from *śabda* (*śabdajātam*). A perusal of *Keno-paṇiṣatpadabhāṣya* 1,5, where Śaṅkara treats more diffusely the same

6. Cfr. *Vākyapadīya* 1,3.

7. Cfr. *vaidikāc chabdhā devādikam jagat prabhavati* and *śabdapūrvam śrṣṭim*.

8. Cfr. *Brhadāraṇyakopaniṣadbhāṣya* 5,1,1: *pratīkatvenābhīdhānatvena ca*; *Chāndogyopaniṣadbhāṣya* 1,1,1: *nāmatvena pratīkatvena* (here Śaṅkara connects *Brahman*'s *prasādāna* with the name-aspect of the function, while seemingly in *Br. Up. Bh.* 5,1,1 the other one is more relevant in view of such consequence); *Bhagavadgītābhāṣya* 8,11: *vācakarūpeṇa... pratīkarūpeṇa*; *Kāthopaniṣadbhāṣya* 1,2,18: *pratīkatvena* (the qualification « *mandamādhyamapratipattīṇ prati* » corresponds to the one found in *Bh. Gī. Bh.* 8,11: « *mandamādhyamabuddhinām* »: cfr. *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* for the reference to *kramamukti* accompanying such qualification in the latter passage); *Praśnopaniṣadbhāṣya* 5,2: *omkārapratīkatvāt*.

theme<sup>9</sup>, shows how the *advaitin* understands by « *vāc* », leaving aside the first referent corresponding to the speech as organ of production of sounds and correlative manifestation of *varṇa*-s (*varṇānām abhivyāñjakam*), the very *varṇa*-s as composing structures patterned in diacronic series, with a finite set of arrangements apt to convey the reference to *artha*-s (*arthasamketaparicchinnā etāvanta evaṃkramaprayuktā*). Subordinately, the term *vāc* can be extended to include even the *śabda* made perceptible by such patterning (*tadabhivyāngyaḥ*), which is the *pada*<sup>10</sup>. It seems pretty evident that Śaṅkara, in his delineating such peculiar function of *praṇava* as a fulcrum of articulate language, is thinking of the latter in terms of the *Veda*. Not only the exposition made by the *ācārya* in *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* which we are here discussing points to this conclusion, but the relationship between *praṇava* and *Veda* is clearly stated in *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣadbhāṣya* 5.1. Here he expands on the very passage in *Chāndogyopaniṣad* 2,23,3 under which we have found the function in discourse, saying that actually the *praṇava* is both the intimate reality of *Veda* and that whence *Veda* comes forth<sup>11</sup>. In fact, the latter is apparently a product by way of division of the *praṇava*, and conserves with it an identity that is felt like the one between *upādānakāraṇa* and its effects, identity denied, as we have seen, to the world in respect of *śabda*. If it is licit to try a somewhat daring operation of exegesis, which is nevertheless justified by the consonance of the passages dealing with our argument, we would suggest that the *nityaśabda* preceding the world be regarded also as the *praṇava* itself, and its semantic burden as including also the one subsisting in respect of *Brahman*. The manifestation of the *varṇa*-s and their combinations in the form of the *Veda*-s, is but a scission of that, either co-eternal with it or taking place before every *sṛṣṭi* of the world. If Śaṅkara's treatment of the state of *avyakta* is kept in mind, the very prominent part played by *nāman*, side by side with *rūpa*, as *bījaśaktyavastha* will afford a point d'appui for such reading. It is sufficient to consider Harivṛṣabha's scanty account of the doctrine of identification of *praṇava*

9. He actually quotes as authority the same passage from *Aitareyāranyaka* 2,3,7,13 referred to in *Ch. Up. Bh.* 2,23,3, « *akāro vai sarvā vāk saiṣā sparśāntaḥsthoṣmabhir vyajyamānā bahvī nānārūpā bhavati* ».

10. It does not seem correct to read, with Ānandagiri, this last point as an hint to *Sphoṭavāda*, at least in the physiognomy presented by it in Śaṅkara's criticism under *Br. Sū.* 1,3,28. Better it would be perhaps to read here « *śabda* » as the diacronic configuration of *varṇas* and nothing more.

11. « *sarvo hy ayaṃ veda oṃkāra eva / etatprabhāva etadātmakaḥ sarvaṃ rgyajuḥsāmādibhedabhīna eṣa oṃkāraḥ* ». It should be remarked the use of the term « *prabhāva* » that, while akin to « *prabhava* » in the *sūtra* under examination, seems to confer an undertone of glory/efficacy of manifestation to the role of *praṇava* in regard of *Veda*.

with *Veda*-s, to realize that the view expressed by Śrī Śaṅkarācārya is not unfamiliar to the perspective of *Sphoṭavāda* proper<sup>12</sup>.

Yet there is an all-important difference: even if the manifestation of names is in view of the knowledge of *Brahman*<sup>13</sup>, and they are, before its displaying, the *bīja* of the universe, in Śaṅkara's perspective they are not identical with *Brahman*. Like Bhartṛhari's *eka sarvabīja*<sup>14</sup> they are responsible, when intervening in the process of *śrṣṭi*, of the differentiation of the world, but not as the principle modified, apparently or in truth<sup>15</sup>. Such a principle in the great *advaitin*'s view must be conscious, in order to account for the presence of consciousness in experience<sup>16</sup>, and their objectuality precludes the possibility of acknowledging them as the same. This is particularly discernible in the cautionary use on the part of Śaṅkara of the productive locution utilizing the suffix — *kalpa* to attenuate the weight of *sarvajñatva* of *Veda*-s in the beginning of *Sāstrayonitvādhikarāṇa*. As Padmapāda remarks commenting upon *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* 1,1,3<sup>17</sup>, «*kalpapratyayaprayogo bhāṣye boddhṛtvābhāvād iṣad aparisaṃpṛāptiā*». In this «*iṣat*» lies all the difference between the *ācārya* and Bhartṛhari, with his epigoni! In which way, then, do the names enter into the differentiation of the objectual universe? They are to be understood as the illusory factors of modification. We refer to Śaṅkara's clear presentation of the whole picture of their connection with *Brahman* in his *Taittirīyopaniṣadbhāṣya* 2,6: here he distinguishes between a state of latence and a state of *vyākṛtatva* of these factors: it is in the second one that they work as conditioning limitations bringing the multiplicity into being on the untouched background of their witness<sup>18</sup>.

12. Cfr. ad *Vākyapāḍīya* 1,10: «*praṇava eva veda ity eke / sa hi sarvaśabdārtha-prakṛtir iti*», where *śabdārtha* can well enough stay for *nāmarūpa* in the commentator's outlook. It is even possible that Harivṛṣabha is actually quoting Śaṅkara's own opinion: on his age, cfr. MADELEINE BIARDEAU, *Vākyapāḍīya Brahmakāṇḍa avec la vṛtti de Harivṛṣabha*, Paris, 1964, p. 6 ff.

13. Cfr. *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣadbhāṣya* 2,5,19: «*yadi hi nāmarūpe na vyākriyete tadā 'syā' 'tmano nirupādhikaṃ rūpaṃ prajñānaghaṇāṅkhyam na pratikhyāyeta*».

14. Cfr. *Vākyapāḍīya*, 1,4.

15. Cfr. on this argument GAURINATH SASTRI, *The Philosophy of Word and Meaning. Some Indian Approaches with Special Reference to the Philosophy of Bhartṛhari*, Calcutta, 1959, p. 56 ff.; MADELEINE BIARDEAU, *op. cit.* in n. 12 *supra*, p. 8 ff.

16. On the difficulties implicit in admitting a contrarywise construction, cfr. *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* 1,1,7; 2,1,6 «*acetanasyāpi cetanabhavo nopapadyate*» (adopting the *Sāṃkhya* standing); 3,3,54 (showing the objectuality to be incapable of developing consciousness).

17. *Pañcapādikā*, *varṇaka* 6.

18. «*ātmasānābhivyaktanāmarūpābhivyaktyā (scilicet bahubhavanam) / yadā ātmasānā nāmarūpe vyākriyete tadā ātmasvarūpāparityagenaiva brahmaṇaḥ apravibhaktadeśakāle sarvāvasthāsu vyākriyete / tad etan nāmarūpavyākaraṇam brahmaṇo bahubhavanam / nānyathā niravayavasya brahmaṇo bahutvāpattir upapadyate*» etc.; cfr. also afterwards: «*mūrtāmūrte hy avyākṛtanāmarūpe ātmasānā antargatena ātmanā vyākriyete / vyākṛte ca mūrtāmūrtaśabdavācye te ātmanā tv apravibhaktadeśakāle iti kṛtvā ātmā te abhavad ity ucyate* / ».

Unlike Maṇḍanamiśra's construction of the relation of *Brahman* with *śabdatattva*, which can be considered as an acknowledgment of absolute selfsameness, here the very reduction of the multiplicity to the intervention of our factors forbids the exegete of *Śruti* any easy establishment of identity, under the pain of bringing *Brahman* itself under the sway of mutability. If there is constant dependence of *nitya-śabda* on immutable consciousness, even before the manifestation of the world, no interdependence valid in the two opposite trends can be allowed, and *Brahman* conserves full autonomy in regard both of the semantic quasi-archetype of manifoldness and of their relationship. Such a one-sided identity, as a matter of fact, is no identity at all<sup>19</sup>.

It could be supposed that such a dichotomy between *Brahman* and *nityaśabda*, being but a reflection of the one established by *Kevalād-vaitavāda* between an absolutely real *Caitanya* transcending every linguistic expression and a less-than-real *māyā* depending on it<sup>20</sup>, have been introduced by Śrī Śaṅkarācārya altering a previously existing *Sphoṭavāda*-like doctrine, reflected with a lesser degree of distortion in Bhartṛhari's construction. But such is not the case. Whatever be one's judgement about Śaṅkara's relative extent of originality, his presentation in this matter not only can be seen wholly to consist with the cosmogonical texts in *Śruti*, but actually allows for an anthropomorphically oriented treatment of *Brahman*'s role with an unmistakable flavour of ancient theistic outlook, which is nearly completely missing in *Vaiyākaraṇa* picture.

A considerate perusal of the authorities quoted by the *ācārya* from *Śruti* in order to ascertain *śabdaprabhavatva* under *Brahmasūtra* 1,3,28 and of his commentary thereof, will show how his rendering of the whole process conforms to the pattern generally understood by Vedic texts in accordance with his reading of them, that is quite near to the letter. The employment for the purpose of manifesting universe of the passage in *R̥gveda* 9,62,1 and of *Mahāvyāhṛti*-s referred to by the *bhāṣya-kāra*<sup>21</sup>, which founds the role of *nityaśabda* in its Vedic context, is hardly comprehensible without an intimate association with the divine figure of Prajāpati who furnishes, as it were, a bridge across the gap between the eternal, but bereft of consciousness, *bija* of the world and *vyaktiniṣpatti*. By itself, *nityaśabda* would not be able to fill in such a gap. The operation performed by Bhartṛhari introducing *kālaśakti* as a functional substitute for this divine figure, albeit possibly making

19. Cfr. *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* 1,4,3: « *paramēśvarādhīnā tv iyaṁ asmabhiḥ prāga-vasthā jagato 'bhyupagamyate na svatantrā* » and again *Taittirīyopaniṣadbhāṣya* 2,6: « *na brahma tadātmakam / te tatpratyaḥkhyāne na sta eveti tadātmake ucyete* ».

20. Cfr. Padmapāda's reading of the theme under discussion, *loc. cit.* in n. 17 *supra*: « *tatparatantratvāt rajjusarpavat* ».

21. The first in an untraced passage and the second in *Taittirīyabrāhmaṇa* 2,2,4,2.



use of an archaic doctrinal background<sup>22</sup>, cannot avoid a considerable alteration of the general picture to be found in *Śruti* and in succeeding tradition, as documented in the apparatus of quotations common to Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja<sup>23</sup>.

That such tradition has a weight far from neglectable is to be seen from the fact that Bhartṛhari himself chooses to begin his *Vākyapadīya* with a *maṅgalaśloka* that, albeit erasing every reference to the manifestator of the world and the economy of *nityaśabda* in his role, explicitly recalls the important passage in *Mahābhārata* 12,224,55 f. cited by

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22. The reference to *devatāpakṣa* in *Vākyapadīya* 3,9,62, if we read it along with Helārāja (cfr. GAURINATH SASTRI, *op. cit.* in n. 15 *supra*, p. 41 ff.), could be interpreted as an acknowledgment on the part of Bhartṛhari of some debt in regard of *Kālavāda* (on which argument cfr. PERI SARVESWARA SHARMA, *The Kālasamuddeśa of Bhartṛhari's Vākyapadīya* (together with Helārāja's commentary translated from the Sanskrit for the first time), Delhi-Varanasi-Patna, 1972, pp. 29 ff. Cfr. also S. K. BELVARKAR and R. D. RANADE, *History of Indian Philosophy. The Creative Period*, New Delhi<sup>2</sup>, 1974, p. 448 ff.; LILLIAN SILBURN, *Instant et cause. Le discontinu dans la pensée philosophique de l'Inde*, Paris, 1955, p. 137 ff.; cfr. also V. RAGHAVAN, *Rtu in Sanskrit Literature*, Delhi, 1972, p. 1 ff. and 131 ff., for the *modus operandi* of *Kāla* in concrete human life). The multiformity of the presentations of time in dependence on the various *kriyā*-s outlined by Bhartṛhari, leaving untouched its fundamental and unchanging character, could be read as a confirmation of such ideal continuity, since it answers a criticism like the one voiced (after Bhartṛhari, it is true) by Śīlaṅka, ad *Sūtrakṛtāṅga* 1,1,2,2: «*Nāpi kālāḥ kartā*» etc. (cfr. A. L. BHASHAM, *History and Doctrines of the Ājīvikas*, London, 1951, p. 231). If this view should correspond to reality, it would make still less comfortable Maṇḍana's commitment to Bhartṛhari's tenets, since *Kālavāda* is put aside with other unsound doctrines already in *Āgamaśāstra* 1,8: «*Kalāt prasūtiṃ bhūtānām*» etc. and does not find place in *Kevalādvaita* proper.

23. Such apparatus could well come from some previous *bhāṣya* literature no more available nowadays: the difference in *Śruti*-s adduced by the two *ācārya*-s (Śaṅkara's *bhāṣya* citing the untraced passage and *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* 1,2,4 before the *Smṛti* evidences, then, as an addition apparently introduced on second thought after the whole discussion, *Taittirīyabrahmaṇa* 2,2,4,2, while Rāmānuja's one puts this latter passage with *Taittirīyāranyaka* 2,6 before it as sole instances of *Śruti* authorities) and the different order in the presentation on their part of *Smṛti* passages (Śaṅkara quoting *Mahābhārata* 12,224,55 [see Poona critical edition, p. 1257 f.], *Viṣṇupurāṇa* 1,5,62 [see Calcutta edition, with preface dated Śaka 1887; Śaṅkara gives the readings «*karmanām ca pravartanam*» for «*kṛtyānām ca prapañcanam*» and «*nirmame ca maheśvaraḥ*» for «*devādīnām cakāra saḥ*», following the edition of *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* in Satyānandagrānthamālā, Delhi-Varanasi<sup>2</sup>, *Sam.* 2028 Vi., p. 249] and *Mānavadharmasāstra* 1,21 [see Calcutta edition, 1967], whereas Rāmānuja reverses the sequence of the last two strophes [giving for the reading «*pravṛttayaḥ*» in *MBh.* 12,224,55 «*prasūtayāḥ*», a variant unknown to Poona critical edition: see the edition of *Śrībhāṣya* in Ubhayavedāntagrānthamālā, Madras, 1963, Part 1st, p. 360]) seems to point at their dependence on two different sets of textual tradition deriving from a common source. This impression would be reinforced, if one could hypothesize a dependence of Śaṅkara on a previous commentator for the connection of the discussion of *Sphoṭavāda* and *Varṇavāda* with *Devatādhikaraṇa*: the fact that Rāmānuja does not include such item in his treatment of it would, in this case, be congruent with the dependence on a different *bhāṣya*. A further element of differentiation could be found in the knowledge of



both the *ācārya*-s as the very first *Smṛti* authority to corroborate *śabda-prabhavatva* in the ancient perspective <sup>24</sup>.

The features we have been pointing out, namely the partial identity with *Brahman* — in terms of coexistence with/dependance from it — of *nityaśabda*, its articulation in terms of all-connecting *praṇava* and *Veda*-s, its position in the manifestation of the universe as activity of the divine figure of Prajāpati, all together seem (even in Śaṅkara's treatment, along with other traditional elements of the orthodox world-picture inherited by the great *advaitin*, according to the special point of view of *Kevalādvaitavāda*) to constitute the original background of a doctrine of origination of the world of objectual manifoldness by a semantic quasi-archetype, which admitted of an ancient form of *Sphoṭavāda* as one of the possible explanations of its ontological status.

Upavaṛṣa on the part of Śaṅkara, which is not to be found in Rāmānuja (even in *Sribhāṣya* 3,3,51, corresponding to *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* 3,3,53, he is silent about this old teacher): as a matter of fact, Upavaṛṣa is quoted as authority on *Varṇavāda*, in the very discussion lacking in Rāmānuja. The other quotation of Upavaṛṣa in Śaṅkara's *bhāṣya* shows that the knowledge about him is connected with the one about Śabara, who also seems to be ignored by Rāmānuja. We may, therefore, establish a nexus relating the *advaitin*'s commentary upon *Brahmasūtra* 1,3,8 (with personal elaboration, given the extent and lucidity of his exposition therein) and the one upon *Brahmasūtra* 3,3,53: in both there is the presence of Upavaṛṣa and even in the first one Śabara could be present, although not mentioned explicitly. In fact the synthetic formulation in Śaṅkara's text, «*varṇā eva tu śabdaḥ iti bhagavān upavaṛṣaḥ*» reproduces the final clause of *Sābarabhāṣya* 1,1,5: «*gākāraukāra-vi-sarjaniya iti bhagavān upavaṛṣaḥ*». It is well possible that either Śaṅkara, or his intermediate source, is consciously recalling such text. If this intermediate source exists, it is responsible for the nexus now remarked: positively its presence is hinted at by such nexus and negatively by Rāmānuja's silence. Besides, the hypothetical intermediate source would account for Śaṅkara's referring to Śabara instead of more recent *Mīmāṃsaka*-s, who would not have been existent at the time of that *bhāṣya*. Even the knowledge exhibited by Padmapāda (Śaṅkara's direct disciple according to the tradition, which we have no reason to disregard in this matter) of Upavaṛṣa's tenets (cfr. the exposition made by SANGAM LAL PANDEY, *Pre-Śaṅkara Advaita Philosophy*, Allahabad, 1974, p. 161 ff.; but his view that «*Śaṅkara too has drawn upon Upavaṛṣa's Vṛtti on the Brahmasūtra*», if leaving out of consideration an intermediate source, would not reckon well enough, at least in our opinion, with the connection with Śabara in Śrī Śaṅkarācārya. If such connection would be considered Śaṅkara's own work, we would be left with the problem of a preference accorded to the ancient teacher of the *Mīmāṃsā* not only difficult to explain in view of latter developments in this doctrine, but extraordinary in the *ācārya*'s extant production as a commentator too), would depend on this lost *bhāṣya*. As for what concerns the identity of its author, he could be «*Sundarapāṇḍya*», the ancient teacher known both by Śaṅkara and Padmapāda on one side and by Kumārila on the other, and interested in both the field of *Vedānta* and of *Mīmāṃsā* (on whom cfr SANGAM LAL PANDEY, *op. cit.*, p. 194 ff. and, scantly, M. T. SAHASRABUDHE, *A Survey of the Pre-Śaṅkara Advaita Vedānta*, Poona, 1968, p. 148).

24. Cfr. his text: «*anādinidhanam brahma śabdātattvaṃ yad akṣaram / vivartate'rthabhāvena prakriyā jagato yataḥ //*» and the one quoted by Śaṅkara (on which cfr. n. 23 *supra* too): «*anādinidhanā nityā vāg utsrṣṭā svayambhuvā // ādau vedamayi divyā yataḥ sarvāḥ pravṛttayaḥ /*».

Bhartr̥hari built his highly original linguistics and metaphysics on such a background, just as Śaṅkara, with a greater fidelity to the heritage of past ages, systematized it within the boundaries of his own *darśana*. Other features of the *ācārya*'s presentation of *śabdaprabhava* *vatva*, like, for instance, the role played by Prajāpati's mind as locus of the apparition of *nityaśabda* before *śṛṣṭi*<sup>25</sup>, the configuration of this apparition as remembrance<sup>26</sup> or atemporal perception<sup>27</sup>, the apparent qualification of *Brahman* on its part<sup>28</sup> and so on, albeit reflecting they too a preceding work of doctrinal elaboration, are part of internal history of *vedānta-darśana* more than of the general background we have here briefly tried to individuate.

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25. Cfr. in the text under discussion «*manasi prādurbabhūvuh*»; in *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣadbhāṣya* 1,2,4 «*manasā 'nvālocayad*».

26. Cfr. the similitude in the text under discussion: «*api ca cikīrṣitam artham*» etc.

27. Following Padmapāda's reading of the interpretation on the part of Śaṅkara of *Brahmasūtra* 1,1,3 as an instance of *śaṣṭhītatpuruṣa* (on which cfr. n. 17 *supra*): «*tasyaiva jñānaśaktivivartātmakatvāt nāmaprapaṇcasya*»; such view is in harmony with Śaṅkara's rendering of the omniscience of the *jīvanmukta* in *Taittirīyopaniṣadbhāṣya* 2,1: «*saha yugapat ekakṣaṇopārūḍhaneva ekayopalabdhya savitṛprakāśavan nityayā brahmasvarūpavyatirikṭayā*» and with his doctrine of the eternal presentiality of the consciousness (cfr. *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* 2,3,7: «*na jñātur anyathābhāvo 'sti sarvadā vartamānasvabhāvatvāt*») and could afford a unifying apperceptive ground for the diacronic pattern of the *varṇa*-s, eliminating the necessity of an atemporal but aconscious *sphoṭa* to transport, as it were, such peculiarity of the *sākṣin* into the field of fleeting objects, and obviating to the difficulty emphasized by K. KUNJUNNI RAJA, *Sphoṭa: the Theory of Linguistic Symbols*, in «*The Adyar Library Bulletin*», vol. XX, parts 1-2, May 1956, p. 114, according to whom the *Varṇavādīn*-s «do not explain how simultaneity and succession are compatible in the same act of the mind». As Sureśvara limpidly puts it, «*ekayā 'kramavartinyā vyāpnoti kramavartinaḥ*» (*Taittirīyopaniṣadbhāṣyavārtika* 2,122). But even in the case of remembrance the diacronicity should be superable in Śaṅkara's original perspective: the atemporal *sākṣin* is supposed by the process of reminiscence, as we can see from Śaṅkara's criticism against Buddhist *Kṣaṇikavāda* (cfr. *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* 2,2,25 and 2,2,31; *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣadbhāṣya* 4,3,7: «*vartamānātītayor bhinnakālatvāt / tatra vartamānapratyaya ekaḥ śrīṅkalāṅvayavasthānīyo 'titaś cāparas tau pratyayau bhinnakālau tadubhayapratyaya viśayaśpṛk cec chrīṅkalāpratyayas tataḥ kṣaṇadṛṣṭāvāpītvād ekasya vijñānasya punaḥ kṣaṇavādāhānīḥ /*»). Otherwise *samastapratyavamarśinī buddhi* would be but a gratuitous assumption.

28. Cfr. for instance *Āitareyopaniṣadbhāṣya* 3,6: «*tad atyantaviśuddhaprajñopādhisambandhena sarvajñaṃ īśvaraṃ sarvasādhāraṇāvyākṛtajagadbījapravartakaṃ niyantrtvād antaryāmisamjñam bhavati*» etc.